

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0579	Case Officer:	Anna Tidey
Application Type:	Prior Not. - Agricultural to Dwelling		
Proposal:	Proposed conversion of four agricultural barns to four residential dwellings.		
Site:	Hammonds Mill Farm, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NB, , ,		
Validation Date	6 Mar 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	19 Aug 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Prior Approval is Granted	Recommendation Date:	28 Nov 2025
Target Date:	1 May 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Anna Tidey</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	28 Nov 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0579

**Hammonds Mill Farm, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NB, ,
Proposed conversion of four agricultural barns to four residential dwellings.
Mr Amir Khan**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Flood Risk & Drainage:

We have reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Response. The applicant has provided sufficient information for us to remove our earlier objection.

Fluvial Flood Risk

Revised Finished Floor Level (Barns 3 and 4): The proposed finished floor levels (FFLs) for Barn 3 and 4 (Dwellings 3 and 4) are now proposed at 27.75mAOD based on Node 364 levels, with EA email confirmation. This will provide a FFL ~890mm above 1:100+35%CC and 690mm above 1:100+105%CC which is deemed acceptable

Confirmation of No Built Footprint or Land Raising: The applicant has confirmed there will be no additional land raising or additional built footprint as part of the development which is deemed acceptable.

Assessment of Unmodelled Watercourses: The applicant has proposed no alterations to the roof arrangement or layout is proposed and although gutters and downpipes will be replaced, downpipes positions and connections to the existing surface water drainage will not be altered. The existing surface water drains will be jetted and a CCTV survey undertaken including the brick culvert, the drain under the infilled mill pond and the drain from the surface water outfall to the north of Barns 1 and 2 which is deemed acceptable. Evidence of this will be required at the Discharge Condition stage.

Surface Water Flood Risk: The applicant has demonstrated that no built development will occur within the 1:100 + climate change surface water flood extent and there are no obstructions to the existing flow paths. The FFL's for Barns 1 and 2 will be raised to 29.80mAOD (905mm above ground levels). 600mm flood mitigation above predicted surface water flood depths will be provided which is deemed acceptable.

Pedestrian Escape Route Plan: Safe escape has been demonstrated for both the fluvial and surface water flood risk to Jane Murray Way (>33.5mAOD) via a public footpath/farm track which heads north of the development which is deemed acceptable.

Surface Water Drainage: It is proposed that surface water from Barns 3 and 4 will utilise the existing drainage arrangements, while Barns 1 and 2 will discharge to the existing culvert via a mill pond which is to be reinstated and a flow control chamber.

Foul Water Drainage: As a shared package treatment plant is proposed which is located outside the application boundary, we would expect the applicant to provide evidence that permission has been obtained to connect to the treatment plant, that it is adequately sized to take the additional flows and a foul water maintenance and management plan which identifies responsible parties for the lifetime of the dwellings will be required for the shared system.

We would advise the applicant that any new foul water package treatment plant should be located outside of any modelled flood extents and be located a minimum of 5m from any watercourse/ditch. The system will need to either meet with the Environment Agency's General Binding Rules for package treatment plants, or an Environmental Permit will be required from the Environment Agency. We would also advise that any new outfall(s) into the watercourses/ditches on this site will require Ordinary Watercourse Consent from West Sussex Lead Local Flood Authority.

Recommend a Condition re: flood risk awareness and an Informative re: Ordinary Watercourse Consent.

Environment Agency:

We have no objection to the proposal. Recommend a planning condition, re: compliance with the FRA, be attached to any planning permission, and that the details in relation to the condition be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Conservation Officer:

The application site is a Grade II listed former mill house, later a farmhouse, located in a rural position to the south of Burgess Hill. The house, which has been substantially extended, dates (from the list description) from the 18th century or earlier, although there has been a mill on the site since at least 1482. Map regression suggests that during the course of the late C19th and early C20th the significance of the mill working at the site declined as the importance of agriculture increased - this is reflected in changes to the various outbuildings associated with the house. Mill working ceased at the site in early C20th and the 3 storey former mill building, which was located to the west of the house, was demolished in 1974. At present, the former mill house, later farmhouse, is associated with a number of buildings of an agricultural character, including the former dairy building (now a residential conversion) and the pair of large 1960s portal framed barns which are the subject of this application. Although the mill building itself has been lost there is also surviving physical evidence of the mill use within the setting of the listed building in the surviving mill race, outline of the (now drained) mill pond, part of the tail race, part of the wheel pit and the mill pond overflow stream.

It is likely that the former mill house will be considered to possess historical evidential and illustrative value as a good example of a building of its type and period, altered and extended over the years in response to the changing socio-economic context and the evolving needs and aspirations of successive owners, as well as aesthetic value. As a former country mill house, later farmhouse the rural setting of the building makes a strong positive contribution to the special interest of the listed building and the manner in which this is appreciated. Likewise the surviving features relating to the functioning of the mill also make a strong positive contribution in this respect. The existing agricultural buildings on the site are on the whole not of any particular quality or significance, but make a limited positive contribution to the setting of the mill house in terms of the narrative of the site and its development of form and function over time.

The planning application, which is for a prior notification application for the conversion of four barns to four residential dwellings, follows on from approval of a Part Q application for a similar scheme. Each of the barns is a portal framed building, the four buildings placed side by side in two pairs.

Given the limited positive contribution which the existing barns make to the setting of the listed building their retention in their current form is not considered of significant importance to the character of the setting of the house, however the current proposal does raise a number of concerns in terms of the impact on the setting of the adjacent listed building and the historic farmstead of which it is part:

- I have previously expressed serious concerns regarding the suitability of these structures for conversion, or whether this could be achieved with a result which was satisfactory in architectural or aesthetic terms, or in terms of the impact on the setting of the listed building, however the approval of the Part Q application indicates that the Council is satisfied that the conversion is a practical possibility.
- Nonetheless I have concerns regarding the impact that the provision of four new dwellings in such close proximity would have on the character of the setting of the mill house, which is currently one of tranquil rural isolation, with development in the immediate context of the house currently limited to

retained agricultural buildings, only one of which has been converted for residential use. The introduction of four new dwellings into this context intensify the levels of activity in the area, to the detriment of the existing rural tranquillity of the site.

- The design, layout and elevational treatment of the 4 new dwellings is as shown for this Part Q submission. These aspects of the proposal were revised during the course of the previous application, and as revised demonstrate the existing buildings on the site retained and adapted for residential use in a manner which does broadly retain their existing agricultural character, subject to detail which could be reserved by condition. The site plan as submitted also appears to show that the residential curtilages of the 4 new dwellings would be confined to the buildings themselves, with no associated garden or outside space save for the courtyards provided in effect within the shell of the existing structures. In terms of the visual effect of the proposal on the setting of the adjacent listed former farm/mill house, this revised scheme will therefore be less impactful than the original Part Q proposal, and had the principle of the residential conversion been otherwise unproblematic in heritage terms this aspect of the scheme might have been regarded as acceptable.

However, in my opinion the principle of the provision of 4 new houses within the close setting of Hammond Mill Farmhouse is contentious for the reasons set out above- i.e. increased noise and activity associated with a significantly intensified domestic use within the historic farmstead, which will detract from the currently tranquil, rural character of the house's setting. This will harm the special interest of the listed building and the manner in which this is appreciated.

The proposal is therefore in my opinion contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34, and will result in a low-mid level of less than substantial harm through impact on setting to the significance of Hammonds Mill Farmhouse, such that paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply.

Environmental Protection:

No objection.

Contamination Officer:

This application looks to convert four barns into four residential dwellings. Historical data indicates that the site operated as a flour mill from circa 1874 to circa 1985. The current use of the site is as a farm. Given these historical and current uses, the buildings for conversion may have been used for the storage of items such as biocides, fuels, animal corpses, etc., which have the potential to cause localised contamination. Additionally, vehicles and machinery may have been stored and repaired within the agricultural buildings. There would also be concerns of asbestos materials within the structure of the buildings.

Therefore, a phased contaminated land condition should be attached to ensure the site is safely developed for its end use. Additionally, a discovery strategy should also be attached, so that in the event that contamination not already identified prior to construction and works is found, works stop until such time that a further assessment has been made, and further remediation methods put in place if needed.

Recommend approval with conditions for a preliminary risk assessment of potential contamination, a detailed risk assessment and an options appraisal and remediation strategy.

WSCC Highways:

Following a review of the submitted plans, the proposals appear identical to previously approved application DM/21/3330, of which WSCC as Local Highway Authority (LHA) was a consultee for, raising no highway safety concerns.

As per the LHAs previous comments, the proposals are not anticipated to give rise to a material intensification of use of the existing access point. The site exhibits suitable car parking provision and turning space, as well as storage for bicycles.

The movements associated with agriculture have done so safely with no known safety highways concerns, and C3 residential uses are considered less intensive. West Sussex County Council in its role

as LHA has therefore considered the proposal on that basis. The prior approval is therefore considered acceptable in highway terms.

West Sussex Fire & Rescue:

Currently the nearest Hydrant to these proposed properties is 635 metres away. The supply of water for firefighting for a domestic premises should be within 175 metres. If an alternative water supply is to be considered it will need to comply with the requirements of Approved Document B (AD-B) Volume 1: B5 section 14 and agreed with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. Evidence is also required to show suitable access and turning facility is provided and meets with AD-B Volume 1: B5 section-13 requirements.

Recommends a planning condition

Housing Standards Officer:

Comments made in respect of Environmental Health legislation for minimum bedroom sizes, means of fire escape, heating, ventilation and natural lighting requirements for kitchens, bedrooms and living rooms.

MSDC Street Naming and Numbering Officer:

The proposed development will require formal address allocation. Recommends an Informative.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Hassocks Parish Council:

Recommend Refusal. The committee reiterate their comments from application DM/21/3330:

The referenced agricultural buildings are in a very poor condition and beyond repair, almost certainly requiring a complete rebuild. It is therefore the belief of the Parish Council that the proposed application falls outside the scope of Class Q which relates to the 'conversion' of existing buildings; these buildings will not be conversions they will be new builds. Furthermore, the proposed design is out of keeping with the area and is therefore contrary to Character and Design, Policy 9, of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and Policy DP26 of the District Plan. Furthermore, the application is contrary to:

- o Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan policy 1 - Local Gap/preventing coalescence. There have already been several large developments within the Local Gap between Hassocks & Burgess Hill.
- o The proposal is not in keeping with the surrounding curtilage of the listed building.

INTRODUCTION

This is an application under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, for the conversion of four agricultural barns into four residential dwellings at Hammonds Mill Farm, off London Road in Hassocks.

The planning history for the site includes a Part Q permission under DM/21/3330 for 'Proposed conversion of 3 agricultural barn buildings into 4 residential dwellings. (Amended Plans received 26.01.2022 showing revised design details)'. The Prior Approval issued under that application was dated 08.03.2022.

The current application under DM/25/0579 was made valid on 06.03.2025, which is before the 3 year consent expired on the earlier approval. No works appear to have commenced on the site to implement the approved development under DM/21/3330.

The current application was accompanied by a Planning Statement which confirms that the application should be considered under the 'transitional provisions' as a result of the timing of the submission of the application. The amended Part Q regulations came into effect after 20th May 2025.

As the regulations are complex a legal opinion has been sought to clarify which regulations are relevant in the determination of the current application under DM/25/0579, ie. the 'transitional provisions' or the current regulations, as amended. The Legal advice is to apply the transitional provisions. In making this assessment it is relevant that the current application (DM/25/0579) was validated on 06.03.2025, that is before May 2025, which is the cut off transitional date.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/21/3330. Proposed conversion of 3 agricultural barn buildings into 4 residential dwellings. Amended Plans received 26.01.2022 showing revised design details. Approved March 2022.

DM/18/0868. Removal of existing entrance gate and cattle grid with the erection of a new painted steel entrance gate with brick walling either side with railings above and new post and rail timber fencing. Approved May 2018.

CN/004/98. Proposed stables (Private use only). Approved March 1998.

CN/007/97. Proposed double garage. Approved March 1997.

CN/019/92. Conversion of adjoining building for additional accommodation and erection of conservatory. Approved December 1992.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site of the application is a farmyard located to the north west of Hammonds Mill Farmhouse, which is a Grade II Listed building.

The four barns that are the subject of this application are located in two pairs within the established farmyard area which already accommodates an existing residential property known as Old Dairy Cottage. The barns lie to the north and south of an open concrete yard, which slopes from north to south. All of the buildings share a long vehicular access drive with the adjacent farmhouse, off London Road.

The submitted Location Plan illustrates that the existing residential properties at Hammonds Mill Farm, ie Hammonds Mill Farmhouse and Old Dairy Cottage, the barns that are the subject of this application, and a large area of land is in the ownership of the applicant, extending north to Jane Murray Way and to London Road to the east of the site.

The accompanying Planning Statement confirms that the Hammonds Mill Estate extends to 93 acres/38 hectares. The statement confirms: *'A local farmer continues to rent two enclosed fields of 25 acres to graze sheep and cut hay in a further 25 acres under the current registered County Parish Holding farm number'.*

The farm buildings are sited in the open countryside between Burgess Hill and Hassocks, to the south of the built up area boundary of Burgess Hill, outside the boundary of the Local Gap between Hurstpierpoint and Burgess Hill.

The buildings appear to be in a low level of use for storage with a small quantity of hay and logs and some agricultural equipment and trailer storage inside the buildings, which was evident from the site inspection.

Although the Mill Stream to the south of the site of the barns at Hammonds Mill Farm is shown to flood, with associated Flood Zones 2 and 3 extending to the south of the farmyard area, the buildings that are the subject of this application do not fall within these zones. Whilst close to the flooding risk area the barns are not located within an area which is at risk of flooding from the nearby rivers/streams.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks a Part Q consent for the conversion of two sets of barns on the site, annotated on the existing site plan as Barn building 1 (with an existing area of 377 sqm), 2 (450 sq m), 3 (169 sqm) and 4 (218 sqm), to create four new residential units, consisting of 2 x 2 bed, 1 x 3 bed and 1 x 4 bed units.

The proposed dwellings would have the following floor areas and bed numbers, as indicated on the proposed Floor Plans:

Dwelling 1 - 98 sqm - 3 bed
Dwelling 2 - 320 sqm - 4 bed
Dwelling 3 - 95 sqm - 2 bed
Dwelling 4 - 98 sqm - 2 bed

All of these residential units have living accommodation located solely on the ground floor level and outdoor amenity space and parking areas located within the building footprints, as shown on the submitted plans for the conversion scheme. The existing external yard is shown to be retained between the barns to serve as a vehicular access area.

The submitted plan shows Dwellings 1 and 2 located within altered Barns 1 and 2. Together these barns measure 27m wide by 29m long (approx.), giving a total floor area of 783 square metres. The submitted plans indicate the height of the existing barns and their shallow twin pitched roof profiles. The barns have a minimum eaves height of 3m and a maximum eaves height of 5.5m, and ridge heights of 5.5m and 7m (approx.).

The existing barns 1 and 2 have steel portal frames and are finished externally with a mix of grey concrete block walls and vertical and horizontal timber panels, with shallow pitched roofs finished with cement fibre sheet roofing.

Barns 1 and 2 are surrounded on the west, north and eastern side by grassed embankments with established tree planting. Level access into the barns from the yard is provided from the front (south elevation) of the building.

The proposed floor plans for Dwellings 1 and 2 show the proposed parking spaces for the new units to be accessed from the southern and western elevations of the building, with parking spaces created for both units within the adapted building footprint. Elevation plans indicate that 3 bays of Barn 1 are to be removed and 1 bay of Barn 2 will be taken down in the conversion works. Where the roofline on Barn 1 is shown to be cut back to create a private inner courtyard and parking areas, set within the building footprint, a new hipped clay tiled roof would create covered parking spaces within a shared 'cart shed' feature.

The proposed plans show the elevations of the new dwellings would be finished in horizontal timber boards, and horizontal concrete wall panels, with the introduction of painted rendered walls on the south west elevation. Dark grey framed glass panels/sliding windows and doors are proposed in the north east, north west and south east elevations. The main rooflines on the buildings would be finished with grey zinc standing seam roof sheeting.

The existing barns 3 and 4 have concrete portal frames and are finished externally with a mix of grey concrete block walls and vertical timber panels, with shallow pitched roofs finished with cement fibre sheet roofing. These barns are located to the south of the farmyard and Old Dairy Cottage.

The proposed floor plans for Dwellings 3 and 4 show the proposed parking spaces for the new units to be accessed from the southern elevations of the building, with covered parking for 2 cars for both units sited within the adapted building.

The proposed plans show the elevations of the new dwellings would be finished in the retained render blocks, or timber clad, with some sliding vertical timber screens added on the south eastern and north western elevations where recessed glazing and new access doors are proposed. Inset glazing is proposed to serve the living/kitchen areas and bedrooms in the two units. The rooflines on the pair of converted barns are shown to be finished with vertical standing seam zinc sheet cladding.

The application has been accompanied by a Planning Statement which includes a description of the site and buildings, the estate history, planning history, a Heritage appraisal, details of the proposal and an assessment of how the proposals meet the legislative framework set out in Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Planning Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The Planning Statement is available to view on the planning file.

With regard to the Part Q proposal under this application the Planning Statement contains the following points:

'The design approach will be to retain the simple vernacular farm building forms and multi bay elevational appearance, while replacing external roof and wall materials with a palette of sustainably sourced, local farm building vernacular materials which will improve and enhance the overall external appearance when compared to the poorer quality, agricultural industry standard materials used in the existing buildings.

-The vertical, timber board, slat elevational treatment between the top of the 'solid' external walls and the eaves and gable end sheet cladding, which provide good ventilation to the buildings are a particular feature. The proposal is to retain and refurbish/part replace this external elevational treatment with the addition of double glazed, simple timber framed, internal opening bands of glazing, set back on the interior side, which will retain the appearance and function of the open vertical slats providing diffuse natural light and natural ventilation to many of the spaces in the new dwellings.

-As the character and form of the buildings is that of a framed structure, where external walls and openings between structural columns are not load bearing and can be open, closed, or partly closed to suit a particular use of the building, either originally, or during the lifetime of the building, proposals for new openings required to provide necessary further windows and doors for the new dwellings are to introduce those elements as full height/full width openings in conjunction with timber board cladding to reflect and retain this framed bay characteristic of the buildings.'

In addition the application has been supported with a Structural Report, by Cassells Drummond - Building Structure Consultants, based upon the report submitted in 2021 for the earlier application DM/21/3330. The report has been reviewed and updated following a reinspection of the buildings in February 2025.

The Structural Report states: *'As no significant structural problems were identified with the barn buildings during the inspection and an initial analysis of the impact on the structure of the proposed residential conversion works did not reveal that any structural alterations would be required, it was not considered necessary to recommend that an invasive structural survey or a full, detailed structural analysis should be undertaken'.*

The Structural Report concludes as follows: *'All the barns are structural sound, structural elements are in a good condition and as a result, the barn buildings are capable of being converted into residential dwellings to Building Regulation standards without any significant modification, alteration or addition being required to be carried out to the existing structures of the barn buildings.*

The structures of the barn buildings are essentially a mid 20C portal frame design that does not rely on load bearing external walls to transmit roof and wind loads to the frame and foundations. This gives considerable flexibility in the extent of openings that can be formed in external walls, both at the time of original construction and throughout the life span and different uses of the barns.'

During the course of determining the application detailed drainage information, including a Flood Risk Assessment and a Drainage Strategy, have been submitted to address earlier objections from the Flood Risk and Drainage Team.

LIST OF POLICIES

As this is an application to establish whether prior approval is required and is not an application for planning permission, the application falls to be assessed against Part 3, Class Q of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended.

The timing of the submission of the application, within the period of 'transitional provisions', means that whilst there have been changes to the Part Q regulations, since the last approval on this site under DM/21/3330, which came into effect in May 2025, the application will be determined under the same regulations, in this case.

As this is an application to establish whether prior approval is required and is not an application for planning permission, the application falls to be assessed against Part 3, Class Q of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended:

"Permitted development

Q. Development consisting of—

- (a) a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; or
- (b) development referred to in paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.

Development not permitted

Q.1 Development is not permitted by Class Q if—

- (a) the site was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit—

- (i) on 20th March 2013, or

- (ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use, or

- (iii) in the case of a site which was brought into use after 20th March 2013, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;

- (b) in the case of—

- (i) a larger dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit—

- (aa) the cumulative number of separate larger dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 3; or

- (bb) the cumulative floor space of the existing building or buildings changing use to a larger dwellinghouse or dwellinghouses under Class Q exceeds 465 square metres;

- (c) in the case of—

- (i) a smaller dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit—

- (aa) the cumulative number of separate smaller dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 5; or

- (bb) the floor space of any one separate smaller dwellinghouse having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 100 square metres;

- (d) the development under Class Q (together with any previous development under Class Q) within an established agricultural unit would result in either or both of the following—

- (i) a larger dwellinghouse or larger dwellinghouses having more than 465 square metres of floor space having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;

- (ii) the cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeding 5;

- (e) the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained;

- (f) less than 1 year before the date development begins—

- (i) an agricultural tenancy over the site has been terminated, and

- (ii) the termination was for the purpose of carrying out development under Class Q, unless both the landlord and the tenant have agreed in writing that the site is no longer required for agricultural use;

- (g) development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of this Schedule (agricultural buildings and operations) has been carried out on the established agricultural unit—

- (i) since 20th March 2013; or

- (ii) where development under Class Q begins after 20th March 2023, during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;
- (h) the development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point;
- (i) the development under Class Q(b) would consist of building operations other than—
 - (i) the installation or replacement of—
 - (aa) windows, doors, roofs, or exterior walls, or
 - (bb) water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services, to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse; and
 - (ii) partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(i)(i);
- (j) the site is on article 2(3) land;
- (k) the site is, or forms part of—
 - (i) a site of special scientific interest;
 - (ii) a safety hazard area;
 - (iii) a military explosives storage area;
- (l) the site is, or contains, a scheduled monument; or
- (m) the building is a listed building.

Conditions

Q.2—(1) Where the development proposed is development under Class Q(a) together with development under Class Q(b), development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to—

- (a) transport and highways impacts of the development,
 - (b) noise impacts of the development,
 - (c) contamination risks on the site,
 - (d) flooding risks on the site,
 - (e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order,
- and
- (f) the design or external appearance of the building, and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.

(2) Where the development proposed is development under Class Q(a) only, development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the items referred to in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) to (e) and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.

(3) Development under Class Q is permitted subject to the condition that development under Class Q(a), and under Class Q(b), if any, must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date.

Interpretation of Class Q

Q.3. For the purposes of Class Q—

"larger dwellinghouse" means a dwellinghouse developed under Class Q which has a floor space of more than 100 square metres and no more than 465 square metres having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;

"smaller dwellinghouse" means a dwellinghouse developed under Class Q which has a floor space of no more than 100 square metres having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order.

ASSESSMENT

The key issue in this case is whether the application complies with the relevant criteria of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended. Class Q, Part 3, Schedule 2 of the Order sets out the circumstances when the change of use of an agricultural building to a Class 3 dwellinghouse can be considered permitted development, and this has been set out in full above.

The first part of the Class Q regulations requires a number of tests to be met, the first of these (i) require that on 20th March 2013 the building to have been used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit. There does not appear to be any doubt over the past use of the barns, which lie within an established agricultural unit. A Statutory Declaration has been submitted at Appendix A of the supporting Planning Statement, which confirms the use of the barns that are the subject of this application include use for lambing, food and bedding storage and agricultural equipment storage, and confirming the agricultural use in March 2013.

The proposal appears to accord with the criteria listed under (b), (ba), (c), (d), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l) and (m) and the LPA have no evidence to suggest anything to the contrary. With regards to (e) 'the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained', the submitted planning statement confirms that a farming operation continued at the 93 acre Hammonds Mill Farm until 2018, when it was sold as a small country estate. A local farmer continues to rent two fields of 25 acres to graze sheep and cuts hay in a further 25 acres.

In regards to criteria (g), which states:

'the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses'

Consideration has been given to the housing standards in the four new residential units, and the comments of the MSDC Housing Officer have been forwarded to the applicant's agent. In particular consideration for means of escape, adequate ventilation and the provision of natural light have been raised. It is considered that the design of the four units have incorporated appropriate glazing for adequate light and ventilation for the kitchen, living/ dining areas and bedrooms in each of the new units.

In regards to criteria (h) it states:

'(h) the development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point;'

The proposed plans clearly show the building works within the existing external framework for each barn.

There is also a requirement under clause (i) of criteria (i) that the development under Class Q (b) would consist of building operations other than the works in (aa) or (bb), 'to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse'.

The proposed plans clearly show the building works within the existing external framework for each barn, with no extensions required.

In this case the facts provided are sufficient to convince the Council that the building works required in order to make the building habitable would fall within the list of operations set out in paragraph Q.1(i) (aa) and (bb) and that they are "reasonably necessary" to convert the building into the proposed four new dwellings.

In regards to criteria (e) and (m), which state:

'(e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order;'

'(m) the building is a listed building.'

The barns that are proposed to be converted are not listed buildings, but do lie in close proximity to the Grade II listed former mill house at Hammonds Mill Farm, and share the same vehicular access.

The Parish Council has raised some concern that the proposal is not in keeping with the surrounding curtilage of the listed building. It is a material consideration that a previous approval was granted for the same development of four dwellings within the existing, converted barns.

The Conservation Officer has made her assessment of the current and former proposal, under the Part Q proposal for DM/21/3330.

In her opinion ..there is ..*'limited positive contribution which the existing barns make to the setting of the listed building their retention in their current form is not considered of significant importance to the character of the setting of the house'*.

The Conservation Officer considers that *'the proposal will cause a low-mid level of less than substantial harm through impact on setting to the significance of Hammonds Mill Farmhouse, such that paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply.'*

Paragraph 215 is contained within Section 16 of the NPPF which refers to Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, under the subsection, entitled 'Considering potential impacts', and states:

' Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

In determining this application it is necessary to consider the significance of the harm of this development proposal upon the Grade II Listed building at Hammonds Mill Farm, ie, the heritage asset. The Council's Conservation Officer has assessed that the impact of the amended proposal is at the lower end of the 'less than substantial' impact category.

The benefits of this scheme include the sensitive design approach that has been adopted in the previously approved conversion scheme, to create new dwellings, their associated garden areas and parking provision within the outer walls of the barns. The location of such associated areas of domestic use will ensure that the domestic paraphernalia and activities associated with residential use will be contained within the barn structures on the site.

The change in use of the barns for living accommodation will change the environs of the barns and the use of the associated farm yard. There will be added benefit as the residential use will result in a less intensive use of the access by cars and domestic traffic rather than by heavy plant/ agricultural machinery. As such the impact of the proposed use is considered likely to result in a less intensive, quieter and more contained level of activity than full scale agricultural use of the barns.

The reasons in favour of the proposed conversion scheme in terms of 'public benefit' are that the proposal will create 4 new dwellings, sited alongside two existing residential units. The proposal involves the reuse of the barns that are already present at the site, with adaptations to the bulk of the largest building, with associated visual benefits to the wider rural landscape. The proposal represents a sustainable development and will result in new energy efficient homes.

The four new units would contribute to the supply of smaller dwellings in the area, with 3 smaller units under 100 square metres, and one larger 4 bed dwelling created within the adapted buildings. There would be a short term economic benefit to the local economy during the construction phase and a long term benefit from the use of local services by the future residents.

It is considered that sufficient evidence of the structural strength of the buildings to be converted, and the extent of the building works have been provided, and as such the application is supported with adequate details to ensure the quality of the conversions.

Overall, and for the reasons expressed above it is considered that the conversion and adaptation of the barns will have a neutral impact upon the setting of the adjacent Grade II Farmhouse.

Conditions

Conditions as stated under part Q.2 require the Local Planning Authority to assess whether prior approval is required in respect of transport and highways impacts of the development, noise impacts of the development, contamination risks on the site, flooding risks on the site, whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change to a C3 residential use and the design and external appearance of the building. These considerations are detailed below:

(a) Transport and highways impacts of the development

West Sussex County Council Highway Authority has been consulted on this application, and a summary of their comments are included in this report. In their assessment it is considered that there would be no reason to resist the proposal on the basis of traffic generation, given the established agricultural use. It is considered there would be no reasons to refuse this application on this condition.

Parking provisions for the proposed dwellings have been shown on the submitted floor plans. The plans showing at least 10 parking spaces for the four new dwellings.

The Highways Authority have assessed that the site has suitable car parking provision. In the case of this Part Q application an assessment against the District Plan Policy DP21 for Transport and WSCC Parking Standards is not required. The assessment is to be made in regards to the transport and highways impacts of the development. The Highways Authority conclude that the potential overspill is not anticipated to result in a highway safety issue and the prior approval is acceptable in highway terms.

(b) Noise impacts of the development

There are not considered to be any noise impacts from the proposal that would justify withholding approval.

(c) Contamination risks on the site

The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has been consulted on the application and has suggested conditions to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken to ensure that the living spaces are safe from contaminants.

(d) Flooding risks on the site

The Drainage and Flood risks of the proposed residential development on the site have been the subject of extensive scrutiny by the Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Team. The applicant's agent has at their request submitted a detailed Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Response. This has provided sufficient information for the Flood Risk and Drainage Team to remove their earlier objection. On this basis the proposal is considered acceptable and detailed mitigation measures will address potential flooding risks.

(e) Practicality of change of use

The barns at Hammonds Mill Farm are located within the designated Countryside area, beyond the built up area of Burgess Hill. The proposed residential units would be arranged off the farm yard with shared access which serves Hammonds Mill Farmhouse and Old Dairy Cottage at the site. Each of the proposed residential units have separate entrances and parking provision and this will allow the residents to live independently. The proposed site layout allows each unit some outside amenity space.

(f) The design or external appearance of the building

The proposed design utilises cladding and maintains a rural/industrial appearance for the barns, which would complement the farmstead location.

CONCLUSION

To summarise as this is not a planning application, the policies contained within the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan for Hassocks are not relevant to this determination.

For the reasons that have been outlined above it is considered that the application should be considered under the 'transitional provisions' as a result of the timing of the submission of the current application in March 2025, which predates the amended Part Q regulations, which came into effect after 20th May 2025. Therefore, the application has been assessed in accordance with the Part Q regulations that were in place at the time of the consideration of the last application under reference DM/21/3330.

It is considered that the prior approval process is relevant because there is certainty regarding the former agricultural use of the barns and balance of evidence provided is sufficient to convince the Council that the building works required in order to make the building habitable would fall within the list of operations set out in paragraph Q.1(i), Part 3, Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

Therefore it is considered that this application for prior approval should be allowed with a series of planning conditions, as recommended by the various consultees and as agreed by the applicant in draft.

Decision: Prior Approval is Granted

Case Officer: Anna Tidey